The African American Experience in Physical Education and Kinesiology: Plight, Pitfalls, and Possibilities

Samuel R. Hodge and David K. Wiggins

In this paper, we offer discourse on the historical plight and contemporary experiences of African American faculty in Kinesiology and Physical Education (KPE) programs at predominantly White institutions (PWI) of higher education. First, we discuss the historical plight of African American KPE professionals. Second, we discuss the current demographics and status of African American faculty in the academe. Third, we elaborate on the experiences of African American faculty in KPE programs, particularly at PW-IHE. Fourth, we identify some common issues and pitfalls to avoid in recruiting, hiring, retaining, tenuring, and promoting African American faculty. Lastly, we offer recommendations to increase the presence and improve the experiences of African Americans in KPE programs.

In his lecture at the 2009 National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education Annual Meeting, John M. Dunn, President of Western Michigan University, stated that “Truly great universities must be diverse. They must be inclusive and there must be programs committed to recruiting and supporting others who may feel excluded” (Dunn, 2009, p. 272). He also said one of the challenges is that “we must have a greater presence of individuals who come from underrepresented communities in our professional ranks as faculty members, scholars, and researchers (p. 275). We agree and will elaborate on these points within this paper.

Today there is an ever increasing and more diverse population of ethnic minority students attending US colleges and universities (Ryu, 2008). From 1995 to 2005, the number of students enrolled in US colleges and universities increased markedly from 14.2 million to 17.5 million (a 23% rise). During that period, changes in enrollments of students of color (a 50% increase from 3.4 to 5 million) outpaced the 8% gain (9.9 to 10.7 million) by White students (Ryu, 2008). The National Center for Education Statistics reported that in fall 2007 there were 18,248,128 students enrolled at the 4,339 public and private two- and four-year US colleges and universities. Of these, 64% were White, 13% Black, 11% Hispanic, 7% Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 3% international students (Planty et al., 2009).

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In contrast to increased enrollments of students of color, there exists a consistently low representation of African American faculty at predominantly White institutions (PWI) of higher education. In 2007, only 7% of all faculty in the US were Black\(^2\) (Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman, 2009) and mostly they taught at historically Black colleges and universities\(^4\) (HBCU). Today, we know little about the experiences of African American faculty at PWI and even less is known about such faculty in Kinesiology and Physical Education (KPE) programs at doctoral-granting institutions. In this paper, we engage in discourse on African Americans in KPE. First, we discuss the historical plight of African American KPE professionals. Second, we discuss the current status of African Americans in the academe. Third, we elaborate on the experiences of African American faculty in KPE programs, particularly at PWI. Fourth, we identify common issues and pitfalls to avoid in recruiting, hiring, retaining, tenuring, and promoting African American faculty. Lastly, we offer recommendations to increase the presence and improve the experiences of African Americans in KPE programs.

**Historical Plight of African American KPE Professionals**

One of the ironies in the history of physical education is the fact that the first person to hold an academic position in the profession was an African American. Aaron Molineaux Hewlett, a Brooklyn born African American who had established his initial reputation as a boxer and trainer, served as director of physical education and culture at Harvard from 1859 until his death in 1871 (Henderson, 1939; Smith, 2003).

Two of Hewlett’s former students, African Americans John Bailey and his son George, became boxing instructors at Harvard for an indeterminate period of time during the latter stage of the nineteenth century. No African American, however, would hold an academic position in physical education at a PWI from the time of Hewlett’s death in 1871 and the hiring of Roscoe Brown by New York University in 1950. The racial discrimination in American society during this period kept African American physical educators out of PWI. Fortunately they had an alternative which was to teach at such well-known HBCUs as Howard, Fisk, Hampton, Tuskegee, Morgan State, and Lincoln (PA). Teaching at these institutions, while limiting in regards to resources and facilities, allowed African American physical educators an opportunity to work closely with colleagues of their own ethnic heritage and exhibit important evidence of Black self-reliance through the design and development of general physical activity and sports programs (Mumford, 1948; Pierro, 1975; Townes, 1951).

African American physical educators not only were limited throughout the latter half of the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries to teach in HBCUs, but had no other choice than to matriculate to PWIs to pursue their academic degrees. With no training schools designed specifically for African American physical educators, no undergraduate professional preparation programs until 1924 when Howard and Hampton universities both established four-year degrees; and virtually no graduate programs provided at HBCUs, African Americans set on pursuing careers in the profession at the higher levels of instruction took their advanced degrees at such
notable PWIs as Springfield College, New York University, University of Iowa, University of Chicago, Boston University, University of Michigan, The Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, The Pennsylvania State University, and Indiana University. The institution of choice for a master’s degree for an overwhelming number of African American physical educators was Springfield College, while the greatest number of those seeking a doctoral degree seemingly found their way to the University of Michigan and New York University (Springfield College, 2009; Weatherford & Weatherford, 1953).

African American physical educators benefited greatly from the academic preparation they received at PWIs in the north, but were still generally left to live and work in the south where they encountered racial discrimination in their personal and professional lives. The most troubling and disheartening form of racial discrimination they encountered from a careerist standpoint was the refusal of southern state and regional professional organizations to grant them full participation and membership rights. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century and immediately beyond individual southern states and the Southern District Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (SDAHPER) refused to acknowledge the membership of African Americans and to permit them to hold office and stay in conference hotels. Of concern, the national American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER) refused for years to come to the defense of African American physical educators who were being shut out of state organizations and the SDAHPER. Like many other national organizations representing a variety of professions and interest groups, AAHPER made few genuine attempts to stand up to the racial discrimination committed by its southern chapters toward African American physical educators (Adair, 1942; McNeely, 1941; Nash, 1942; Salyer, 2003).

African American physical educators responded in two primary ways to the racially discriminatory practices they faced. One response was to protest loudly and unremittingly against the injustices they experienced. The one individual who was probably most prominent in this regard was Edwin Bancroft Henderson, the celebrated African American physical educator from Washington, D.C. who wrote the first books on the history of African American involvement in sport and was heavily involved in the Civil Rights struggle at the local, regional, and national levels. Henderson railed against AAHPER for not coming to the defense of its African American members in the southern part of the country. A classic example of this was Henderson’s 1946 editorial in the *Journal of Health and Physical Education*, titled “Tolerance, An Objective.” With his usual frankness and aplomb, Henderson first pointed out the irony of America currently fighting a war for the four freedoms while maintaining racial segregation at home and then pronounced that the leadership of AAHPER was “morally obligated” to guarantee equality for all its members in the south (Henderson, 1942).

In addition to protesting the demeaning social mores and racial exclusivity in the segregated south, African American physical educators in that part of the country created separate state AAHPER chapters. While ultimately deciding against the creation of a separate national organization along the lines of groups such as the National Medical Association (NMA), African American physical educators established their own state AAHPER chapters in the south in an effort to create closer relationships with their colleagues, share ideas on curricular issues and
teaching methods, and organize events while at the same time banding together in the fight for more equitable treatment for all its members (Salyer, 2003; Wiggins, 1997, 1999).

In 1961 AAHPER finally responded officially to the racial discrimination experienced by African American physical educators by establishing an interracial committee named the “President’s Committee to Study Methods of Extending Increased Professional Services to Negro Members of AAHPER” (Cobb, n.d.; Salyer, 2003; “Serving All Members,” 1965). The result of discussions that had taken place since the late 1950s between AAHPER liaison Ross Merrick and several prominent African American physical educators, made a number of recommendations intended to improve race relations in the profession. Four years later, the AAHPER President’s Committee, goaded to action by the National Education Association’s (NEA) recent mandate requiring inclusive membership and that year’s historic Civil Rights Act, passed a resolution imploring state associations to accept memberships regardless of race. The resolution resulted in some success as evidenced a short time later in the *Journal of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation* that open membership policies had been established in Tennessee, Oklahoma, Kentucky, Texas, Virginia, North Carolina, and Florida. Other southern states gradually adopted the same policies with Mississippi probably the last to integrate in the late 1960s or early 1970s (Salyer, 2003; “Serving All Members,” 1965).

The inclusionary membership policies established by southern state AAHPER chapters did not immediately result in the integration of African Americans into the southern district or the mostly White physical education profession more generally. Their entrance into the vastly White physical education profession would be similar to the pace and pattern of racial integration in largely White organized sport. Although a highly select number of extremely gifted African American physical educators assumed important and powerful positions in the profession, the larger number of them have had great difficulty securing academic positions in PWIs, obtaining leadership positions and working on important committees within professional organizations, and being honored for their various accomplishments. Examples of this are many and varied. Of the 89 honor lectures given at the annual conference of the National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education (NAKPEHE) only one has been presented by an African American. Of the 26 presidents of NAKPEHE none of them have been African American. Of the 74 presidents of the National College Physical Education Association for men none of them have been African American. Of the 27 presidents of the National Association for Physical Education of College Women none of them have been African American. Of the over 500 individuals elected to the American Academy of Kinesiology and Physical Education (AAKPE) since 1926 only two have been African American. Lastly, of the 48 presidents of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD) only four have been African American (Davis, 1978; Ethnic Minority Council, 1991; Oteghen & Swanson, 1994; AAKPE, 2009; NAKPEHE, 2009).

Exclusionary barriers to full participation in the profession has been a continual source of concern for African American physical education professionals as articulated in a number of thought-provoking papers including contributions
by Burden and Harrison (2003); Burden, Harrison, and Hodge (2005); Crase and Walker (1988); Davis, Hodge, Frank, and Jones (2006); Hodge (2003); Hodge, Faison-Hodge, and Burden (2004); Hodge and Stroot (1997); King (1994); King and Chepyator-Thomson (1996); and Smith (1993). Importantly, African American health and physical education professionals, through such multidisciplinary organizations as the National Health and Fitness Association (NHFA) have fought to insure more equitable treatment in the profession. It is also true that new alliances have been formed among concerned physical educators, kinesiologists, and others in the allied health fields from diverse backgrounds to uplift the professions to higher equitable grounds. Such groups as AAHPERD’s (2009) Social Justice and Diversity Committee; the American College of Sports Medicine’s (2007) Leadership and Diversity Training Program; the North American Society for Sport Management’s (2008) Diversity Committee; the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport’s (2009) Diversity and Conference Climate Committee; and NAKPEHE’s (2005) Social Justice and Cultural Diversity Committee have made genuine efforts to both increase participation and create a more positive environment for African Americans and other marginalized groups in the profession.

**Status of African American Faculty**

The presence of full-time faculty of color at US colleges and universities has increased from 13% in academic year 1995 to 17% in 2007, based on a total faculty count excluding persons whose race/ethnicity was unknown (Table 1). Specifically, African American (5.4%), Hispanic (3.6%), Asian American (7.6%), and Native American (0.5%) faculty made up about 17% of full-time faculty in fall 2007 (Snyder et al., 2009). Still, most full-time faculty (76.8%) at US colleges and universities were White (44.7% men, 32.1% women). For African Americans, their proportion of representation decreases in the academy at each transition point from 13% of undergraduate student enrollments (fall 2007) to 9.6% of bachelor’s and 10% of master’s degrees conferred to 6.1% of doctoral degrees conferred, which then falls to 5.4% of US full-time faculty (Snyder et al., 2009).

At degree-granting US colleges and universities, 66% of full-time faculty with tenure were men and 34% of full-time faculty with tenure were women (Table 2). In fall 2007, most full-time faculty with tenure were White (82.9%) and less so were 7% Asian/Pacific Islanders followed by 4.6% African American, 3.3% Hispanic, and 2.1% all other full-time faculty combined. Same group comparisons show that nearly 63% of Asian/Pacific Islanders and 62% of White full-time faculty were tenured or held tenure track positions in 2007 compared with 58% of African American, 61% of Hispanic, and 56% of Native American full-time faculty. On the other hand, nearly 42% of Native Americans and 40% of African Americans held nontenure track positions or were employed at institutions with no tenure process compared with 31.5% of Asian/Pacific Islanders, 35% of Whites, and 35% of Hispanics. Tellingly from 1995 to 2005, the number of African American faculty increased mostly in positions that do not lead to tenure (8,529 to 13,767), a 61% change (Ryu, 2008).

On this point, Cooper (2009) explained that the trend for more than two decades has been for colleges and universities to fill what previously were full-time
Table 1  Full-Time Faculty in Higher Education (Totals and Percentages) by Gender and Race/Ethnicity: Fall 1995, 2005, and 2007

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>Percent change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total full-time faculty</td>
<td>550,822 100.0%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>675,624 100.0%</td>
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<td>703,463 100.0%</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>360,150 65.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>401,507 59.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>409,115 58.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>190,672 34.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>274,117 40.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>294,348 41.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td>54.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>468,518 85.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>527,900 78.1%</td>
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<td>540,460 76.8%</td>
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<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>26,835 4.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td>35,458 5.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>37,930 5.4%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>12,942 2.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>22,818 3.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>24,975 3.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>27,572 5.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>48,457 7.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>53,661 7.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Natives</td>
<td>2,156 0.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,231 0.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,340 0.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>10,853 2.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td>28,057 4.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td>31,222 4.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td>188%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These percentages are based on faculty counts excluding persons whose race/ethnicity was unknown.

Data sources: Ryu (2008), and Snyder, Dillow, & Hoffman (2009).
Table 2  Full-Time Faculty Tenure Status (Totals and Percentages) by Gender and Race/Ethnicity: Fall 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Total Full-time faculty</th>
<th>Total Faculty with tenure</th>
<th>With tenure</th>
<th>On tenure track</th>
<th>Not or no tenure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>703,463</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>290,581</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>134,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>409,115</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>192,069</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>72,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>294,348</td>
<td>41.8%</td>
<td>98,512</td>
<td>33.9%</td>
<td>61,983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic African American/Black</td>
<td>540,460</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
<td>240,911</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>93,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>37,930</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>13,388</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>8,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>24,975</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>9,568</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>5,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>53,661</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>20,440</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>13,159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3,340</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1,268</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>605</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>31,222</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>2,848</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>9,773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. These percentages are based on faculty counts excluding persons whose race/ethnicity was unknown. Same Group Comparisons are comparisons of the same gender or race/ethnic group (e.g., White faculty with tenure among White faculty). Not or No Tenure are faculty not on tenure track, positions that do not offer tenure, and faculty at institutions with no tenure process.

<sup>a</sup>Asian American includes Pacific Islanders.

<sup>b</sup>Native American refers to Indian/Alaska Natives.

Data source: Adapted from Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder (2008).
tenure-track faculty positions with part-time adjunct faculty or graduate assistants. From 1992 to 2007, the total number of part-time faculty and instructional staff increased by 77% compared with a 33% increase of full-time faculty. During that time period, there was a 50% increase in White part-time faculty and instructional staff. But much larger proportional increases occurred among faculty of color; that is, increases of 169% for African American, 138% for Hispanic, and 104% for Asian American part-time faculty and instructional staff (Table 3). Moreover, most African American faculty teach at HBCUs. The 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty survey data showed that African Americans were 61% of full-time instructional faculty at HBCUs and 3.8% of faculty at leading PWI (Betsey, 2008). In addition, colleges and universities “offering baccalaureate degrees or lower as their highest degree were more likely to employ Black instructional faculty and staff part time than doctoral and private not-for-profit master’s institutions” (Cataldi, Bradburn, & Fahimi, 2005, p. 3). Again, even when hired at Division I PWI, African Americans are often hired in nontenure track positions (visiting assistant, adjunct faculty); thereby, assuming transitory positions at the bottom of the faculty hierarchy.

Closely related to that phenomenon, African Americans tend to receive lower salaries than Asian American, White, and Hispanic faculty (Figure 1). In 1998, for example, Asian American faculty base salaries ($62,800) were higher on average than White ($57,000) and Hispanic ($54,400) faculty base salaries, which were higher than African American faculty ($50,400) base salaries (Bradburn & Sikora, 2002). These disparities in salaries are explainable; at least in part, in that Asian American and White faculty tend to have several advantages in the academe linked to higher salaries. In general, Asian Americans and Whites are more likely than African American and Hispanic faculty to be promoted, hold tenure, and work at doctoral institutions (Bradburn & Sikora, 2002; Branch, 2001; Padilla, 2003). Again also, African Americans are more likely to be hired into part-time adjunct positions rather than afforded opportunities to join the ranks of their full-time faculty colleagues at leading PWI.

In summary, the current status of African American faculty is that they are mostly located at HBCUs and Division II and III institutions, and they are more likely to be hired into nontenure track positions than Asian and White faculty, which means they have less job security; and can expect lower salaries with less potential for financial growth and less social mobility.

**Plight of African Americans in the Academe**

We now focus more directly on the experiences of African American faculty at the nation’s doctoral-granting universities that house KPE graduate programs. To date, research is sparse on the experiences of African American faculty in KPE programs at predominantly White colleges and universities (Burden et al., 2005; Hodge & Stroot, 1997).

In a national survey, Hodge and Stroot (1997) found that encountering racism was a shared experience voiced by African American graduate students and faculty in physical education programs at PWI and the communities in proximity to the institutions. Using a qualitative approach, Burden et al. (2005) explored the organizational socialization of African American physical education faculty at
Table 3  Full- and Part-Time Faculty and Instructional Staff in U.S. Colleges and Universities by Gender and

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Part</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Part</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals (in thousands)</td>
<td>528.3</td>
<td>376.7</td>
<td>560.4</td>
<td>416.0</td>
<td>681.8</td>
<td>530.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>352.7</td>
<td>208.7</td>
<td>356.9</td>
<td>217.0</td>
<td>420.4</td>
<td>275.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>175.5</td>
<td>168.0</td>
<td>203.5</td>
<td>199.1</td>
<td>261.4</td>
<td>254.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>456.7</td>
<td>332.8</td>
<td>477.0</td>
<td>364.4</td>
<td>547.7</td>
<td>451.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blacka</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>29.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian Americanb</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americanc</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


a Black includes African Americans.

b Asian American includes Pacific Islanders.

c Native American refers to Indian/Alaska Natives.

Data sources: Knapp et al. (2008), and Snyder et al. (2009).
The African American faculty benefitted from access to ample resources at their universities and opportunities for professional growth. In contrast, they were disadvantaged from (a) their White peers’ holding dominant power; (b) perceived neglect in recruiting and retaining more faculty and students of color into the KPE programs, and in diversifying curriculum offerings (e.g., lack of multicultural courses); (c) lack of mentoring by White colleagues; (d) social isolation and marginalization in a chilly climate (nonsupportive colleagues, which resulted in them disengaging from these peers); (e) a need to better engage, mentor, and encourage students of color to nurture their self-images; and (f) racial ideologies that marginalize African American faculty as inferior intellectually with inadequate pedagogy capabilities as perceived by some of their White colleagues and students. The African American faculty also had concerns at what they perceived as double-standards in the promotion and tenure process, feeling marginalized as scholars, and biases against so-called ‘Black scholarship.’ Exacerbating those concerns, they voiced concerns about a lack of African American faculty colleagues, administrators, and other decision makers of color within their departments. Lastly, the African American faculty voiced concerns about perceived biases against research that is not congruent with traditional quantitative methodologies.

There is pressing need to establish policies and practices to successfully recruit, hire, retain, and promote greater numbers of African American faculty at PWI nationwide, including African American faculty into leading KPE doctoral programs (see KPE doctoral program rankings; Thomas & Reeve, 2006).

**Issues and Pitfalls**

During the last decade, much has been written about issues associated with recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting African American and other faculty of color at PWI (Branch, 2001; Dumas-Hines, Cochran, & Williams, 2001; Turner, 2002) as many of these institutions have sought to diversify their faculties. But faculty diversification is a complex goal to achieve both culturally (changing the academic culture) and politically (exposing hidden agendas and biases) and therefore it can be difficult to accomplish. Now, we will discuss some of the issues and pitfalls to avoid in recruiting, hiring, retaining, tenuring, and promoting African Americans.

First, the low representation of African American students in KPE programs combined with other critical factors (e.g., African American doctoral students have a high rate of attrition), contributes to a limited pool of African Americans available for recruiting and hiring as faculty at our nation’s colleges and universities (Hodge et al., 2004; King, 1994). In speaking of recruiting and hiring faculty who reflect traditional notions of diversity (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender) as well as intellectual diversity (ideas, worldviews), Professor Jerry R. Thomas (2003) asserted that,

The fact that we have difficulty attracting faculty of color to our institutions is a direct result of our failure to attract students of color to our doctoral programs. I believe our over emphasis on quantitative values to select doctoral students is a direct influence in this problem. We admit students to programs based on a quantitative notion of smart and fail to look carefully at the other characteristics...
implied by SWAN—hard working, adaptable, and nice. Of course, it is much easier to rely on a GPA and GRE test score than to evaluate the other SWAN characteristics and the notion of social quotient. If we ever hope to achieve a diverse faculty in higher education that represents the world’s cultures, we must begin by achieving a diverse group of doctoral students. (p. 8)

To date, there are few studies on the demographics and experiences of African American doctoral students in KPE programs (Hodge & Stroot, 1997; King, 1994; King & Chepyator-Thomson, 1996). But, we do know that African Americans were awarded less than 6% of the doctoral degrees conferred in the KPE disciplines in academic year 2006–07 (Snyder et al., 2009).

In academic year 2006–07, there 27,430 bachelors, 4,110 master’s, and 218 doctoral degrees conferred in Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies at US colleges and universities (Table 4), according to NCES data (Snyder et al., 2009). Most bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in our disciplines (e.g., exercise science, kinesiology, physical education) were awarded to White graduates (Table 5). In fact, most doctoral degrees in these disciplines were awarded to White (62%) and international (24%) graduates. Much less likely to earn a doctoral degree in these disciplines were African American (5.5%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (6.0%), and Hispanic (3.2%) graduates. Recent studies also confirm the low numbers of African American students in physical education programs. In a national survey, Melville and Hammermeister (2006) found that most physical education teacher education (PETE) majors/minors were White (83%) and male (62.5%). At the other end, only 6% were African Americans (5% men, 1% women).

Ayers and Housner (2008) also surveyed PETE programs across the US to describe the nature of these programs. They found that these programs were comprised of nearly equal proportions of men (51%) and women (48%) faculty, and most were White. Ayers and Housner explained that 92% of the programs consisted of 60% or more White faculty. But, when the six HBCUs were removed from the data set, the proportion of programs reporting 60% or more White faculty increased to 96%. Most (60–79%) PETE programs had fewer than 10% African American, Asian, or Hispanic faculty, and some programs had no faculty of color.

Second, despite the best intentions, often “there is surprise when the hiring cycle ends and once again very few, if any, diverse candidates are hired” (DiversityWorks, 2003, p. 5). At issue is that, “often overlooked in the diverse hiring conundrum is the crucial role that both search committees and institutional culture play in the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty and staff” (DiversityWorks, 2003, p. 4). Central to this issue is faculty, administrators, and search committees’ shortcomings at: (a) spending adequate time understanding what conditions impact whether a “diverse candidate applies, accepts, or stays”; and (b) listening to the voices, “experiences, perceptions, and recommendations of diverse faculty” at their respective colleges and universities (DiversityWorks, 2003, p. 5).

Third, some administrators and faculty at PWI continue to argue that there are too few African Americans in the “academic pipeline to create a sufficient pool of qualified candidates from which to expand the racial diversity of their faculties” (Cross & Slater, 2002, p. 99). That argument is incomplete. Certainly, as mention earlier, there are far fewer African American graduate students and faculty compared with their White peers. In 2005, Whites received 52% of all doctoral degrees
Table 4  Degrees Conferred in Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies—Disciplines by Gender: 2006–07

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<th>Bachelor’s degrees</th>
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<td>Total M % F % Total M % F % Total M % F %</td>
<td>Total M % F %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total degrees PRL studies</td>
<td>27,430 14,190 51.7 13,240 48.3</td>
<td>4,110 2,116 51.5 1,994 48.5</td>
<td>218 109 50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRL Studies</td>
<td>2,686 1,258 46.8 1,428 53.2</td>
<td>236 112 47.5 124 52.5</td>
<td>17 8 47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRL Facilities Management</td>
<td>2,991 1,581 52.9 1,410 47.1</td>
<td>289 129 44.6 160 55.4</td>
<td>13 3 23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/PE (general)</td>
<td>8,510 4,440 52.2 4,070 47.8</td>
<td>1,169 565 48.3 604 51.7</td>
<td>37 20 54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Adm/Management</td>
<td>4,461 3,129 70.1 1,332 29.9</td>
<td>1,349 837 62.0 512 38.0</td>
<td>11 9 81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinesiology/Exercise Science</td>
<td>7,755 3,293 42.5 4,462 57.5</td>
<td>934 425 45.5 509 54.4</td>
<td>113 59 52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health/PE &amp; Fitness (other)</td>
<td>884 409 46.3 475 53.7</td>
<td>121 41 33.9 80 66.1</td>
<td>17 4 23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRL/Fitness Studies (other)</td>
<td>143 80 56.0 63 44.1</td>
<td>12 7 58.3 5 41.7</td>
<td>10 6 60.0</td>
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Note. Total Degrees PRL Studies = Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies including each of the areas of study identified above. Abbreviations: M = Male; F = Female; PRL = Parks, Recreation, and Leisure; PE = Physical education; Sport Adm = Sport Administration. Data source: Snyder et al., 2009.
conferred, compared with 5% awarded to African Americans (Ryu, 2008). On the other hand, there is a sizable pool of both African American graduates and current faculty to attract to faculty positions at PWI. It is important to note that African Americans have had gains in graduate degrees conferred. From 1995 to 2005, the total number of doctoral degrees earned by African Americans increased significantly from nearly 1,600 to 2,900, an 84% gain (Ryu, 2008). Specific to faculty, the NCES reports that in 2007 there were 87,107 Black faculty (i.e., 37,930 full-time plus 49,177 part-time) at US degree-granting colleges and universities (Snyder et al., 2009). Thus, annually there are hundreds of African American graduates receiving doctoral degrees plus thousands of African Americans who hold faculty positions at HBCUs or at predominantly White Division II and III colleges and universities; as well as those who hold part-time faculty appointments. A negative consequence of the increasing trend toward hiring part-time is it further reduces the chances of African American faculty being hired into the ranks of full-time faculty at PWI. It is our position that among the thousands of African Americans in various segments of the academic pipeline most would thrive if recruited and hired to join the ranks of full-time faculty at PWI (Cross & Slater, 2002).

A fourth issue is that African American faculty are often not a part of the primary networks of senior faculty and administrators from PWI and consequently may not be informed about or invited to apply to a position opening (Turner, 2002). A fifth and closely related issue is the perception that degrees from PWI are more credible than degrees earned at HBCUs that serve a large proportion of African American students. This is a misguided perception that must change as attending a HBCU offers unique experiences for all students. HBCUs were founded with a mission to educate African American students (Betsey, 2008). Students at HBCUs benefit in many ways including academically, culturally, and socially (Nelson Laird,

Table 5 Degrees Conferred in Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies by Gender and Race/Ethnicity: 2006–07.

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<th>Bachelor's degrees</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>Total %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total degrees PRLF studies</td>
<td>27,430 100%</td>
<td>4,110 100%</td>
<td>218 100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>14,190 51.7%</td>
<td>2,116 51.5%</td>
<td>109 50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>13,240 48.3%</td>
<td>1,994 48.5%</td>
<td>109 50.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>21,467 78.3%</td>
<td>3,233 78.7%</td>
<td>134 61.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American/Black</td>
<td>2,557 9.3%</td>
<td>374 9.1%</td>
<td>12 5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1,830 6.7%</td>
<td>134 3.3%</td>
<td>7 3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>852 3.1%</td>
<td>113 2.7%</td>
<td>13 6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Natives</td>
<td>242 0.9%</td>
<td>27 0.7%</td>
<td>0 0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>482 1.8%</td>
<td>229 5.6%</td>
<td>52 23.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total Degrees PRLF Studies = all Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies disciplines or areas of study combined. Percentages do not include calculations where student race/ethnicity is unknown. Data source: Adapted from Snyder et al., 2009.
Williams, Bridges, Holmes, & Morelon-Quainoo, 2007). Outcalt and Skewes-Cox (2002) asserted that undeniably “African American students at HBCUs fare better and are more satisfied with their college experience than their peers at PWIs” (p. 336). They are embraced within a nurturing community culture at HBCUs much more so than at PWI (Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002). A sixth issue is that despite the low representation of African American faculty at most leading PWI, very few of these institutions have specific programs designed to recruit and retain African American faculty. Some administrators and faculty are wary of establishing specific initiatives aimed at targeting and hiring African American faculty due to fear of discrimination lawsuits (Cross & Slater, 2002). Moreover, some administrators at PWI are unwilling to risk alienating some faculty in introducing potentially controversial strategies (e.g., target hiring) to hire African American faculty (Cross & Slater, 2002). On this point, Cross and Slater asserted that faculty strongly resent perceived interference from college and university administrators. Faculty hiring decisions are usually left with school directors or department chairs and search committees. But, their good intentions rarely result in the hiring of an African American. “Search committees often approach their charge in a passive, routine way: advertise the position . . . , evaluate resumes, invite three to five candidates for campus interviews, and then make an offer” (Turner, 2002, p. 13). Beyond this, search committees typically do little else to make certain that a pool exists that includes qualified African American applicants.

The seventh issue to be mindful of is that some academic programs focus on hiring faculty of one particular ethnic minority group while neglecting potential faculty of other underrepresented groups. In 2008, Hispanics (46.7 million) comprised 15% and African Americans/Blacks (41.1 million) made up 14% of the US population and were the two largest ethnic minority groups in America (US Census Bureau News, 2008). Less so, Asians (15.5 million) made up 5.1% of the US population. Nonetheless, Hispanics and African Americans are much less likely to be hired into faculty positions at PWI across disciplines than their Asian peers. Tellingly, over the past decade and a half, most PWI in their efforts to diversify their faculty have more often hired full-time Asian American faculty (revisit Table 3), the so-called model minorities in comparison with all other ethnic minority groups. In fact, compared with all other ethnic minority groups, Asian American faculty are much more likely to be hired at public doctoral institutions and receive higher salaries (Bradburn & Sikora, 2002). For example from 1995 to 2007, the number of Asian American faculty nearly doubled from some 28,000 to 53,661, which is the second largest numerical gain after White faculty (Ryu, 2008; Snyder et al., 2009). Faculty must avoid biases in their hiring practices that advantages one ethnic group over another.

A final and also troubling issue is that African Americans have experienced racism, isolation, and marginalization within KPE programs (Burden et al., 2005; Hodge & Stroot, 1997). Findings from this research, albeit limited, are troubling nonetheless and suggest that African Americans are disadvantaged in KPE programs, and may even experience discrimination linked to racism. Not surprisingly, African American faculty may feel isolated as the only one or one of only a very few faculty of color in these programs. Such low representation endangers their success in the academe. Under such conditions, even the most diligent and productive African American faculty member is at-risk in the tenure and promotion process. The good
news is that possibilities exist for establishing guiding principles and policies for practices that will move beyond tokenism toward successful faculty diversification in KPE programs (Hodge et al., 2004).

**Recommendations for Realizing Possibilities**

In their paper, Hodge et al. (2004) made suggestions and identified strategies and resources to guide administrators and faculty in establishing principles and policies for diversifying faculties. In this section, we will expand on their earlier work by presenting a more complete compilation of recommendations advocated by scholars and organizations to successfully recruit, hire, retain, tenure, and promote African American faculty at leading doctoral-granting PWI.

**Institutionalize and Publicize a Commitment to Diversity**

A commitment to diversity must go beyond periodic ethnic festivals and celebrations but rather substantive in terms of establishing and implementing principles and policies advancing diversity (Allison, 1999). In that vein, Frater, Howe, and Murray (1997) introduced the concept of cultural manifestation, which is “the process of declaring intents about diversity, acting on those intentions, and using policies, legislation, and sanctions to enforce or reinforce intentions about diversity” (p. 230). This means academic units should clearly articulate that diversifying the faculty is a priority; they should establish principles and policies accordingly; implement strategies to meet this priority; and institute accountability measures. For example, at The Ohio State University (OSU); a principled commitment to diversity is articulated within philosophical and legal rationale for promoting diversity; policies have been established; university bodies (e.g., OSU Diversity Council) and structures (e.g., Todd A. Bell National Resource Center on the African American Male) have been established; strategies have been implemented; and measures of accountability have been created to realize its commitment. On its website, OSU publicizes goals and successes of its original Diversity Action Plan (OSU, 2009a) and these include “Recruitment of women and minority faculty at senior levels.”

The objective of the original plan [2001] was to increase the number of women and minority faculty in five years . . . At the beginning of the 2006-07 academic year, the figures for these groups were as follows: Female up 22.6%, increase of \( N = 196 \); African-American up 25.7%, increase of \( N = 27 \); Asian-American up 57.9%, increase of \( N = 140 \); Hispanic American up 70.6%, increase of \( N = 36 \); Native-American down 25%, decrease of \( N = 1 \). These results show substantial increases in all but the Native American faculty population. Some exceed the numbers set in the Diversity Action Plan; others are very close to them. (http://www.osu.edu/)

A renewed plan has been launched at OSU, *Renewing the Covenant: Diversity Objectives and Strategies for 2007–2012*.

Also important to institutionalizing its commitment to diversity, the Office of Academic Affairs at OSU includes in the promotion and tenure process an evaluation of faculty’s activities associated with promoting diversity (OSU, 2009b). This measure of accountability support faculty who engage in activities supportive of diversity.
For an example at the departmental level in its strategic plan, the Kinesiology Department at Iowa State University articulates diversity as a major goal. Goal 4 reads: “Expand Recruitment, Improve Retention and Increase Diversity of Students, Staff & Faculty” (2009, n. p.). More KPE programs at PWI should develop strategic or diversity plans to identify their diversity-related goals; strategies to achieve the goals; persons or groups responsible for leadership on specific initiatives; timelines for meeting the goals; and means to evaluate successes and failings. Further such plans should have add incentives such as public recognition (e.g., Distinguished Diversity Award) and monetary rewards (honorariums, scholarships) to acknowledge and reward faculty, staff, and students who demonstrate leadership on issues of diversity. It would be hard to overstate the importance of leadership in establishing a climate supportive of diversity.

Institutionalize Initiatives With Fiscal Commitment

Academic units should support the establishment of advisory councils charged with developing policies that promote faculty diversification. Such councils would have input on such matters as the recruitment and retention of African American faculty by developing policies and strategies to achieve its goals. What’s more, academic units should take advantage of existing opportunities, where available, such as OSU’s Faculty Hiring Assistance Program (FHAP). In brief, the stated goal is to hire at least 5–10 women and 5–10 minority faculty at a senior level each year for five years through the FHAP and other initiatives. The university’s fiscal commitment to the program is estimated at $250,000 to $500,000 each year for five years for a total of $1.25 to $2.5 million in additional continuing costs (OSU, 2009b). The FHAP offset the academic units’ costs of hiring diverse senior level faculty.

A similar strategy was introduced at Duke University, the Black Faculty Strategic Initiative (i.e., funds used in efforts to recruit and retain Black faculty), and has contributed to more than doubling the number of Black faculty at the university. In fall 2003, Provost Lange presented a report to the Academic Council on the Black Faculty Strategic Initiative, and also a renewed initiative, the Faculty Diversity Initiative was launched to support and enhance diversification of Duke’s faculty. The report highlights achievements linked to the initiative such as the increased overall number of regular Black faculty from 44 to 106 from academic year 1993–2006 (Lange, 2006), a 141% increase in Black faculty.

Colleges, schools, and departments should establish such programs as “Minority Scholars in Residence” as implemented at Haverford College, for example that invite graduates to teach within academic units (Cross & Slater, 2002). Upon graduation, the scholar residences can be invited to apply for faculty positions. In a periodic review report, Haverford College’s former president Thomas R. Tritton reported a total of 19 faculty of color in academic year 1994–95 with a modest increase to 24 faculty of color by 2003–04 at the college (Tritton, 2004), a 26% change. Tritton wrote “achieving a diverse community at Haverford is foundational to our work” (p. 11). From the report, here are some examples of the College’s diversity initiatives (taken from pp. 11–12): (a) creation of a Diversity Plan (Building and Sustaining Diversity at Haverford); (b) creation of Diversity at Haverford statement of commitment and philosophy; (c) establishment of Mellon Foundation Minority Undergraduate Program, which provides support for summer research opportunities and scholarship support to encourage traditionally under-represented
students to pursue graduate work in designated fields in the Arts and Sciences; (d) made four faculty opportunity appointments that were Board-approved tenure-track appointments for faculty of color; and (e) establishment of Minority Scholars in Residence program. What’s more, Haverford College’s 20% faculty of color places it at the top among liberal arts peer institutions. In fact, the college was cited in the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2000) as tied for first in the percentage of Black faculty (6.9%) among liberal arts colleges and as first among peer institutions in the percentage of tenured Black faculty (9.7%). Likewise, more academic units should also take advantage of proactive strategies such as target hiring, and opportunity and spousal hiring to recruit and hire African American faculty in areas of need (e.g., physical education, exercise science, sport management).

**Conduct Proactive Searches and Use Networks**

Colleges, schools, and departments must “take a more proactive approach and genuinely search for candidates of color” (Turner, 2002, p. 13). Turner (2002) identified the following steps to advance searches for faculty of color: (a) forming the search committee [make sure the search committee understands that diversifying the faculty is a high priority and that the search committee is comprised of members who are committed to faculty diversification]; (b) educating the search committee on personnel issues [e.g., provide the committee with information about affirmative action policies in regard to hiring]; (c) debunking the myths [e.g., challenge myths about faculty of color such as “to hire minorities, standards must be lowered”]; (d) creating the position description [i.e., write a position description that explicitly states the unit’s commitment to diversifying the faculty]; (e) attracting a diverse candidate pool [i.e., go beyond just issuing a job announcement and waiting to receive applications; search committees must understand that “developing and aggressively implementing a comprehensive recruitment plan that uses multiple recruitment strategies simultaneously will significantly increase the diversity of the applicant pool”]; (f) examining hiring biases [avoid faculty cloning, which is the tendency of faculty to identify and hire colleagues who are like themselves and to reject candidates whose culture, ethnicity, education, experience, or research interests differ from their own]; (g) hosting the campus visit [present a welcoming climate, spend quality time with each candidate, express genuine interest in the candidate, and engage in honest dialogue about faculty expectations in terms of teaching, research, and service]; and (h) making the offer [i.e., negotiate a salary and benefits package that is equitable to that of others in the department] (paraphrased pp. 13–22).

To facilitate the search process, academic units should advertise faculty positions in popular as well as scholarly publications with a significant readership of African Americans, such as the African-American Observer, Black College Today, Black Collegian, Black Men, Diverse Issues in Higher Education, Ebony, Essence, Journal of Blacks in Higher Education, Journal of Black Studies, Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, Today’s Black Woman, and Upscale, to name just a few. In addition, networking through personal contacts can be an even more fruitful strategy to identify potential African American applicants.

Colleges, schools, and departments can also expand the pool of qualified applicants by establishing new and diverse networks beyond traditional PWI and
senior faculty networks (Hodge et al., 2004). Establishing networks with faculty and administrators at HBCUs and other institutions (e.g., community colleges) that serve a large number of African American students and who employ a high proportion of African American faculty would be a good strategy as well. This should include contacting faculty they know at these colleges and universities to ask for contacts of African American faculty who might consider a faculty position at their PWI. This type of networking strategy can be very effective (Cross & Slater, 2002). It is also wise to contact colleagues at leading doctoral-granting universities (see listing of top-ranked KPE programs; Thomas & Reeve, 2006) for such purposes. Professor Jerry R. Thomas, former Chair of the Department of Health and Human Performance at Iowa State University, encouraged faculty to contact colleagues “who are known to prepare the type of individual you are seeking. Particular attention needs to be paid to obtaining applications from candidates of color” and ask “good candidates to apply when you have identified them” (Thomas, 2003, p. 11). Academic units should also connect with placement officers in graduate programs again at various colleges and universities that have a large proportion of African American faculty and graduate students to make contact with recent graduates and future graduates prepared to assume faculty positions (Cross & Slater, 2002).

Another recruitment strategy is to identify, seek out, and make contact with African American and other faculty and doctoral students of color at conferences, symposia, and national meetings. For example, some faculty at PWI monitor conference proceedings to find papers by Hispanic scholars, and find leading graduate programs “to learn who the promising young scholars are” and then they recruit “young scholars on their way to Ph.D.’s” and invite established Hispanic professors to join their universities (Wilson, 2003, p. A15). This strategy is applicable to making direct contacts with African American faculty and students as well.

Retain African American Faculty

Once hired, academic programs must be committed to a cultural manifestation where African American faculty benefit from mentoring, guidance, collegial support, and respect as opposed to feelings of isolation, exclusion, or tokenism (Burden et al., 2005). Further it is important to know that the retention and success leading to tenure and promotion of African American faculty is largely contingent upon many often complex and interrelated factors. We will briefly discuss some of these factors.

Administrative and faculty leadership in any academic unit is a fundamental prerequisite for establishing a climate and culture that welcomes, embraces, and facilitates the success of African American faculty at PWI. This starts with “committed, involved, and savvy leadership at the dean’s level” (Gordon, 2004, p. 186) and must manifest throughout the academic unit including department chairs, program coordinators, senior faculty, and program faculty in general.

It is also critical that administrators, personnel committees, and senior faculty explicitly articulate standards, expectations, and procedures for career advancement to newly hired faculty. It is commonly known that for faculty to be successful in the academy, consistent high quality performances and achievements in the areas of teaching, research, and service are necessary. But, it is also necessary to keep expectations realistic. Wilkinson (2007) asserted that no one faculty member ought to be expected to “serve on all the committees on which you’d like your department
to be represented as ‘diverse,’ for example, and “one person can’t instantly diversify your faculty” (p. 170). In speaking of Latina/o faculty, Padilla (2003) referred to the “obligation factor” wherein faculty of color will often feel obligated to “accept onerous administrative assignments and service work” (p. 188). This may include service on various college and departmental committees, student advisory roles, and community work (Branch, 2001). Certainly, “administrative and service work takes away from the faculty member’s efforts to conduct research, publish, and develop a record of teaching excellence (Padilla, 2003, p. 188). All of which are of paramount importance to the faculty member’s success in the tenure and promotion process. All faculty, and faculty of color in particular, must be protected from unrealistic expectations and overburdening obligations.

The internal climate and culture of the academic unit must reflect genuine support for faculty diversity, as opposed to a place where a revolving door exists of hiring African American faculty only to have them leave because of a lack of collegial support or respect. Academic units should provide African American faculty with individualized mentoring from senior faculty who are genuinely committed to supporting their junior level African American colleagues (Wilkinson, 2007).

African American faculty must be assured that their scholarship interests and research methodologies are valued and respected by their colleagues. This is particularly important to gain tenure and promotion in the academy. But there are those times that “a junior professor espouses a theory or method that goes counter to the senior professors in the department or the college, the untenured professor runs the risk of bad reviews for tenure and promotion” (Padilla, 2003, pp. 186–187). Further, Padilla explained that the less than favorable reviews are typically credited to concern for the quality of the candidate’s work. But in truth, “it is very difficult to distinguish between poor academic work and paradigm clashes” and usually “the senior professors prevail, thus opening the way for distortions” (p. 187) in the tenure and promotion process resulting from paradigm conflicts or the marginalizing of research focused on such issues as social justice, ethnic studies, and so-called Black scholarship.

In the spirit of professionalism and respect, African Americans must be treated equitably as valued colleagues with full institutional membership (rights and privileges) rather than as tokens in a PWI hegemonic culture. That is to say, their views and expertise matter and they are included in decision-making processes and empowered within academic units.

Connecting newly hired African American faculty with a critical mass of African American faculty at the PWI will expand their circle of colleagues who would likely give collegial support and thereby reduce or eliminate the new member experiencing loneliness or isolation. In turn, African American faculty who are recruited and hired are more likely to be successful, promoted, and retained for the long-term (Burden et al., 2005; Turner, 2002). They must also feel a connection to the local community (e.g., churches, schools).

Prepare the Next Generation of African American Faculty

Academic units should seek to create an inclusive and welcoming campus climate for all faculty and students alike. In a spirit of unity, the College of Education and Human Ecology at OSU hosts an annual Student Welcoming Luncheon at the start
of each academic year to celebrate new and returning students while emphasizing its commitment to diversity. At the end of each academic year, the College hosts a Graduate Student and Diversity Forum to engage students and faculty in research activities on issues associated with diversity.

But even more important than such gatherings and forums, academic units should establish and support both need- and merit-based assistantships, fellowships, or scholarships designed to help African American and other graduate students of color enter graduate programs and to complete their degree requirements (Hodge et al., 2004; King, 1994). Financial support (e.g., fellowships) should be made available over multiple years to reduce or eliminate an overreliance on personal and student loans that is common to many African American and other students of color (King, 1994). Financial awards based on need, rather than merit will increase access for more African American, who more likely than their White peers come from low-income families living in high-poverty communities (King, 1994; Livingstone & Wirt, 2004). For instance, fellowships were established at the University of Notre Dame to support African American doctoral students as they completed their dissertations. They received office space, computers, use of university facilities, a travel budget, and a competitive stipend. The intent of this grow your own approach is that the doctoral candidates will apply to regular tenure-track positions at the university after graduation (Cross & Slater, 2002).

Use Existing Organizations and Resources

Finally, the organizations and resources identified here are readily available for those seeking to prepare graduates, recruit, hire, mentor, and retain African American faculty as they navigate the academy. Increasingly, organizations and learned societies such as the AAKPE, AAHPERD, Association of American Universities, American Association of University Professors, American Council on Education, and NAKPEHE support diversity-related efforts including diversifying faculties and student bodies at US colleges and universities (Dumas-Hines et al., 2001). Our presentation at the 2009 AAKPE Annual Meeting and this paper is evidence of AAKPE’s interest in promoting diversity.

Even more, some associations have established committee structures and policies to address issues associated with diversity such as AAHPERD’s Social Justice and Diversity Committee. This Committee’s charge is “to promote social justice and diversity in all Alliance activities” (2009, n.p.). For NAKPEHE’s (2005) Social Justice and Cultural Diversity Committee, its purposes are to: (a) promote awareness and sensitivity among culturally diverse populations through faculty development, conference presentations, and professional programs; (b) promote research agendas focusing on diversity and multicultural issues; (c) reduce any vestiges of prejudice and discrimination that may exist in research efforts, programming, and presentations; (d) encourage social justice and multicultural inclusion in all of NAKPEHE’s structures; (e) advise the Board of Directors on matters of social justice and multiculturalism related to policy statements and projects; and (f) develop and recommend procedures for funding research studies to the NAKPEHE Board of Directors (p. 1). National organizations and learned societies and associations should be used as resources for recruiting, preparing, networking, and supporting African Americans in the academy.
The reader should visit the website DiversityWeb (2009), which is an interactive resource center for higher education. DiversityWeb “offers practical strategies for institutions interested in enhancing their faculty diversity. Best and promising hiring practices from a variety of institutions are interspersed throughout the text, and an extensive annotated bibliography and several appendices are included to help search committees and institutional leaders in this important challenge” (n.p.). In addition, the reader should consult the following and other resources focused on matters associated with diversifying faculty: Barriers to accessing the professoriate (Padilla, 2003); Diversification of the faculty: Frank talk from the front line about what works (Gordon, 2004); Diversifying the faculty: A guidebook for search committees (Turner, 2002); How to retain African American faculty during times of challenge for higher education (Branch, 2001); and the video/workbook program by DiversityWorks (2003).

A compelling need exists for establishing principles and policies to successfully recruit and hire greater numbers of African American faculty in KPE programs at leading doctoral-granting PWI. Retaining, tenuring, and promoting African American faculty means having realistic expectations, providing them mentoring, supporting their research agendas, and protecting their workloads (Branch, 2001). The definitive question is will cultural manifestations of faculty diversity ever be actualized within the nation’s leading KPE programs.

Notes

1. The term minority is used in this paper to be consistent with the work of other authors or sources, but we prefer to avoid this term in reference to a person or ethnic group (e.g., African Americans, Hispanics) because: (a) it does not acknowledge differences between ethnic groups; (b) lacks global validity; and (c) connotes an inferior status.


3. Black is used as an ethnic identifier for mostly African Americans native to the US.

4. The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) as institutions of higher education established before 1964 whose principal mission was then, and remains today, the education of Black Americans (Wilson, 2008).

5. Thomas (2003) explained that in the broader workforce employers seek to hire persons they consider to be SWANs meaning Smart, Hard Working, Adaptable, and Nice.

6. The National Center for Education Statistics categorizes Park, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies as a discipline comprised of: (a) Parks, Recreation, Leisure Studies; (b) Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Facilities Management; (c) Health and Physical Education (general); (d) Sport and Fitness Administration and Management; (e) Kinesiology and Exercise Science; (f) Health and Physical Education/Fitness (other); and (g) Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies (other) (Snyder et al., 2009).

References


Padilla, R.V. (2003). Barriers to accessing the professoriate. In J. Castellanos & L. Jones (Eds.), *The majority in the minority: Expanding the representation of Latina/o faculty, administrators and students in higher education* (pp. 179–204). Sterling, VA: Stylus.


